

Minister launches GPS, MR1M

BY ABANG SALFIAN NAWAWI

KUCHING: Minister of Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism (MDTCC) Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob launches two programmes namely Student Consumer Movement or Gerakan Pengguna Siswa (GPS) and 1Malaysia People's Menu or Menu Rakyat 1Malaysia (MR1M) in conjunction with the supplying of the 1Malaysia products to Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), near here yesterday.

"Up to date, a total of 116 public and private Institutions of Higher Learning (IPT) across the country have set up a GPS of which the objective is to serve as 'ears and eyes' to government apart from giving them awareness of their student's rights as consumers," said the Minister.

Ismail said that intensifying efforts to use the establishment of IPT Clubs was initiated in 2010 with its main agenda was to promote awareness of and enhancing knowledge in the field of consumerism in higher education level. It was also to strengthen the consumer movement at the university, rebranding, with a new name GPS was conducted.

"GPS is the right channel in order to implement consumer education among students either through formal education as well as informal approach. And we all know that the students today are a generation of future leaders who will determine the direction of the country," Ismail pointed out.

He disclosed that statistics released by the Ministry of Health Malaysia shows that a total of 16.2 million or 60 per cent of the people in this country are obese as early as their childhood years.

"Of this amount, about 8.1 million people or 30 per cent suffer

from weight problems, while 30 per cent excess weight problem known as obesity and this problem is caused by the lifestyle of the people in this country.

"Therefore, the Ministry also took the initiative in the double awareness campaigns like the campaign to reduce sugar intake and recommend 'less sugar less expenses' for the people to have the knowledge and skills to avoid the chronic illnesses," the Minister stressed.

Ismail added that for financial management, statistics released by the Insolvency Department shows the trend of increased youth bankruptcy occurring every year from 2006 to 2011 but decreased slightly in 2008.

Based on the expected number of youth increased by 40 per cent of bankruptcy every five years over the period concerned, it is expected the number of youth who will go bankrupt by 2020 since 2006 is approaching 100,000 and the main cause is credit card debt, car loans and hire purchase personal loans, he said.

"If this is left unchecked, it will threaten the country because the youth are a source of primary productivity of the country and youth should be given proper education so that they can manage at once to avoid financial bankruptcy."

Ismail said that to drive the implementation of the programme and GPS activities, the Ministry also provided financial assistance amounting to RM3,000 to every public and private institutions of higher learning to set up the GPS, which is RM1,000 for the establishment of GPS and RM2,000 for the implementation of consumer activity.

"I hope this extended financial provision can be the starting point and the movement of consumer programmes and activities



ISMAIL SABRI with Khairuddin fixing the last piece of the jigsaw to officially launch the GPS witnessed by (from left) Rohani, MDTCC Secretary General Datuk Saripuddin Kasim, Naroden and Wan Ahmad Uzir. PHOTO: RAMIDI SUBARI

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at the university.

With the organisation of activities in a more comprehensive manner, it is hoped to attract more students to participate in the GPS," Ismail pointed out.

He disclosed that to ease the burden of students, the Ministry strongly encourages the stores in the IPT campuses and cafeterias to sell consumer goods at low prices and quality according to the ability of students.

"This can be realised with the IPT selling products in cooperative 1Malaysia and shops available in the campus and in addition, the campuses' stores are encouraged to sell the 1Malaysia products in the cafeteria menu to ease the financial burden of students.

"For cafeterias in large campuses with large number of students, the Ministry encourages

learning 1Malaysia people setting up shop in their campus and up to date, there are four IPTs selling 1Malaysia products through their cooperatives and 41 cafeterias in 33 IPT having the Rakyat 1Malaysia menu."

"There are 1,413 eatery premises across Malaysia with 90 in Sarawak selling breakfast set at RM2.50 (maximum) and lunch set for RM5.00 (maximum), the Ministry will give free promotion to those premises having Rakyat 1Malaysia menu."

Ismail who delivered his speech during the dual launching of the programmes also congratulated UNIMAS for holding the record in Malaysia for having 23 cafeterias in its campus selling the Rakyat 1Malaysia menus as well selling cooperative products in its UNIMAS Cooperative.

"I also wish to call on IPT that have not set up a GPS to set it as my Ministry aims to achieve the establishment of 140 GPS across the country with a focus on public and private institutions."

Disclosing that his Ministry also targetting the number of GPS to reach at least 100 members for each GPS, he said that for Sarawak, he hoped that the existing number of GPS could be improved by 2012.

Also present at the launching ceremony were MDTCC Deputy Minister Datuk Hajah Rohani Karim, Assistant Minister for Planning and Resource Management Datuk Mohd Naroden Majais, Sarawak's MDTCC Director Wan Ahmad Uzir Haji Wan Sulaiman, UNIMAS Vice-Chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Khairudin Abdul Hamid and other distinguished guests.